

introduction

Media Arts is the study of human communication through film, photography, video, audio, computer/digital arts, and interactive media. Creatively, students employ the elements of space, time, light, motion, color, and sound to express their perspectives, feelings, and ideas. Critically, they learn to interpret and evaluate media within aesthetic, cultural, and historical contexts to become more enlightened consumers and effective citizens.

Media Arts is aesthetic-based and uses elements and tools of current and emerging technologies to create works that express feelings and ideas. The act of creation is an essential part of thinking which in turn builds the notion that there are alternative approaches to traditional mass media. In order to learn the language and symbol systems of our current culture, it is important to look at works that are generated from a wide spectrum of sources—from individual visions to the commercial media industry. (Art and life are dependent upon each other and interconnected.) The study of the image and sound elements is an essential prerequisite to the proper shaping of ideas into messages.

in the k-12 curriculum

Introduction. "Media Arts represent a new curriculum requiring new competencies and a new definition of what constitutes learning." (Consadine, 1992)

> As the media have come to occupy a central place in our lives, the need to provide young people with the creative and critical skills to function as effective communicators. critical consumers, and active citizens has become increasingly obvious. "Information is shifting from print to imagery...and the shift...is affecting deeply how we see our world, how we think about it, and how we solve its problems." (White) Over 80% of Americans report that television is their primary source of news and information, and by graduation from high school students have spent more time with television than in the classroom. In effect, television and other media are providing young people with an "alternative education," one with which formal education has not yet come to terms. As the Ontario Ministry of Education's resource guide to media literacy puts it:

> "The fact that media have remained outside the school curriculum at the same time as they have come to dominate so many aspects of our society, and indeed, our individual consciousness, is a tribute to their power to influence us on levels of which we are unaware. It is not surprising, then, that we have come to study the media; it is only surprising that it has taken us so long to start." (Ontario, 1987)

It is now clear that Media Arts can no longer be an optional "enhancement" to education. "If we train students in basic skills such as reading and arithmetic...we must teach them about the media as well." (Anderson, 1992)

The following comprise a rationale for why the media arts are essential to fulfilling the educational potential of all students, K-12.

1. The media arts teach students how to communicate effectively and creatively using the new technologies of visual and auditory communication.

> Creative and imaginative exploration are central to the communication process in media arts. This is not only important when using technology-based mediums for artistic expression, it is equally essential if students are to excel even in more utilitarian communication. Students should understand media arts as challenges in "communication" rather than as challenges in employing "technology," as languages for the exchange of meaning rather than as so many lights and knobs on a box. Such an approach emphasizes media arts' essential continuity with the traditional arts, whether literary, aural, or kinetic.



2. The media arts give students the critical skills to ensure that they control the images they see or hear rather than let those images control them.

In Daniel Boorstin's cautionary words: "What ails us most is not what we have done with America, but what we have substituted for America. We suffer primarily not from our vices or our weaknesses, but from our illusions. We are haunted, not by reality, but by those images we have put in its place." (Boorstin, 1962) Boorstin reminds us that the ability to make media messages is only part of the challenge; we must develop the critical skills with which to receive them as well. The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy argues that: "Amedia literate person—and everyone should have the opportunity to become one—can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media." (Aufderheide, 1992) Critical skills in "reading" media must go hand and glove with creative skills in making media.

3. The media arts emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting the "personal, cultural, and historical contexts" of the media.

Although media messages often present themselves as natural "reality," they always reflect the conventions established by media historically. And while much media is presented to us as impersonal institutional communication, other media is the creation of individuals, reflecting their unique views and cultural backgrounds. Students must understand media

within the aggregate of these contexts if they are to participate in and maintain a cultural democracy.

4. The media arts are oriented toward the "meaningful use of knowledge"—the ability to apply classroom analysis to the world in which they live.

> Media arts must emphasize the importance of productive knowledge, not simply the acquisition of knowledge. (Marzano, 1992) Students in media arts learn such "meaningful uses" as sharing work with a wider community through exhibition or broadcast, becoming more discriminating consumers, and developing the tools to become effective citizens. As McMahon and Quin have emphasized, "...unless students are given the skills to apply their classroom analysis to the world in which they live, there is the danger that this knowledge will remain in the classroom and we will not achieve the aim of producing the media literate, empowered student." (McMahon, 1993)

5. The media arts emphasize a process or inquiry-based approach to learning.

Although it is natural to think of media arts as technique-based, it is more productive to consider it as a process- or inquiry-based discipline since it emphasizes an active engagement with media production, the development of the skills to understand, negotiate, and act on media messages, and the tools to utilize this knowledge in the wider world. The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy has found that

"...educators in principle agree on a pedagogical approach...that learning is hands-on and experiential, democratic (the teacher is a researcher and facilitator), and process-driven."

(Aufderheide, 1992)

 The media arts are cross-disciplinary and offer students an opportunity to apply knowledge in more than one discipline.

> While media arts has many continuities with the "traditional" arts, it has one important difference. Language and music, for example, have been taught as autonomous disciplines for centuries, with specialized faculties and established courses of study. Because of its newness—all but photography are 20th Century art forms—the media arts have no similar tradition. At present, media perspectives are distributed across the curriculum, in studio arts, English, sociology, civics, and history. This emerging field is inherently interdisciplinary and cross-curricular. Although in future years media arts may coalesce into a field similar to more traditional disciplines, to remain effective it must maintain its crossdisciplinary nature. The media arts standards put forward here not only envision teachers instructing students in photography, video, and computers, but also historians talking about the history of media, sociologists helping their students look at audiences, and English teachers discussing the rhetoric of advertising. Because media today is so pervasive, its disciplinary base should remain disbursed. After

all, at a time when more homes have telephones than bathtubs, fifty cable channels blare at us, and Archie Bunker's chair resides in the Smithsonian, there's plenty of media to go around.

7. The media arts teach students to work effectively in groups.

Much media communication, either in production or in dissemination as mass media, requires effective group collaboration for success. While media curricula should emphasize the development of the skills of personal expression, it should also emphasize that the only way we can "transcend ourselves" is through effective collaboration with others.

Media arts is a new discipline with new *challenges* in terms of human resources, equipment and pedagogy. But let us not forget it also gives us the *opportunity* to provide students with a way to turn the one-way system of commercial mass media into a two-way process of discussion, reflection, and action among ourselves and with media itself. Certainly, not all of this can happen overnight. Yet happen it must.



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content standards

- 1. Students explore, generate, and develop ideas and feelings through creating media productions.
- 2. Students apply the media arts genres and their aesthetics to media productions.
- 3. Students employ skills and techniques of a chosen medium.
- 4. Students collaborate effectively in group media production and presentation.
- 5. Students acquire knowledge of the genres, techniques, and aesthetics in the media arts.
- 6. Students utilize critical thinking skills in the study of media messages.
- 7. Students demonstrate understanding and respect for personal, cultural, and historical contexts and the effects of media in shaping and extending human communication.
- 8. Students experience presenting the media arts to a wider community.
- 9. Students demonstrate the ability to actively participate as a discriminating consumer of the media arts to maintain a healthy media environment.
- 10. Students demonstrate the skills to become self-directed lifelong learners in the media arts.



g r a d e s k - 4

In kindergarten through fourth grade, learners relate the meaning of various texts in the media arts to their own real-life experiences or personal needs for entertainment and information, and they begin to examine relationships among textual meanings and the needs or experiences of others. Learners begin to explore the media arts as learning resources and learn how to analyze, interpret, and evaluate media arts genres. They learn to choose among the media arts according to appropriateness of information and effectiveness of technique, and they begin to apply the range of basic skills needed for experiencing, criticizing, producing, and presenting all media arts genres. They draw upon their imaginations, experiences, or explorations of ideas and feelings in developing their own media arts productions and learn how to communicate and express themselves by generating, capturing, manipulating, producing, and presenting information using the media arts. They experience working cooperatively with others and evaluating their own work in the media arts.

g r a d e s k - 4

Content Standards:

#1: Students explore, generate, and develop ideas and feelings through creating media productions.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Sequence or group a series of images and sounds to tell a story or show a relationship, such as by ordering a series of photographs or creating a photographic collage.
- 2. Create images and sounds to represent a series of events of a particular media genre, in activities such as storyboarding a video or role-playing a radio broadcast.

#2: Students apply the media arts genres and their aesthetics to media productions.

- 1. Identify the basic elements of time, space, sound, color, light, and motion and use some of them in media arts productions, exploring music or color, for example, to focus attention or suggest a mood.
- Choose among media elements to organize in expressive ways the communication of an idea or feeling, perhaps reselecting colors for symbolic reasons or background sounds for a sense of place.



g r a d e s k - 4

#3: Students employ skills and techniques of a chosen medium.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Communicate information using effective presentation techniques incorporating media equipment to deliver an oral or visual report. For example, audiotape a story.
- 2. Refine a range of skills and techniques appropriate to more than one media genre in such activities as: making a collage of photographs from magazines on a single theme, or using a paint program on a computer to make a design.

#4: Students collaborate effectively in group media production and presentation.

- 1. Actively listen to others and take turns, respecting the opinions, ideas, and needs of other learners.
- Participate in more than one defined role in a group production or a presentation, by serving, for example, as the camera person for a group video and the audio mixer for a group radio show.

g r a d e s k - 4

#5: Students acquire knowledge of the genres, techniques, and aesthetics in the media arts.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Distinguish among types of media arts, by recognizing, for example, the differences between film, video, and computer images.
- 2. Recognize techniques of a media production, by identifying, for example, dramatic use of lighting and camera angles.

#6: Students utilize critical thinking skills in the study of media messages.

- 1. Recognize the differences among media genres, identifying, for instance, the differences between fiction and non-fiction.
- 2. Interpret and evaluate the intent of a variety of media messages, inferring, for example, motives behind the ordering of information for the purpose of persuading the viewer.



g r a d e s k - 4

#7: Students demonstrate understanding and respect for personal, cultural, and historical contexts and the effects of media in shaping and extending human communication.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Describe how a media message relates to their own personal beliefs, values, and needs, by explaining a quality such as the appeal of a specific film.
- 2. Analyze and evaluate the influences on society of a variety of media messages, such as the effects of television on target audiences.

#8: Students experience presenting the media arts to a wider community.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

1. Plan and present a media production for an audience, perhaps by videotaping and playing back a videotaped presentation.

g r a d e s k - 4

#9: Students demonstrate the ability to actively participate as a discriminating consumer of the media arts to maintain a healthy media environment.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Analyze the impact of technology on daily life and personal time management, by discussing such topics as how technology is used at home, at school, and in the community.
- 2. Identify and assess the ways in which consumers use media for various purposes such as recognizing differences between information and entertainment.

#10: Students demonstrate the skills to become self-directed lifelong learners in the media arts.

- 1. Initiate a media arts activity to pursue individual interests, perhaps by making flick books, a film animation, or a photography project.
- 2. Choose among the media arts for specific tasks, such as creating computer images for a report.



g r a d e s 5 - 8

In fifth through eighth grade, learners progress toward growing independence and exploration while developing habits, attitudes, skills, appreciation, and ideas essential for a lifetime of learning. Through experiences that provide opportunities for students to express themselves using media, they can learn to use materials, equipment, and concepts to convey their own ideas and feelings. Grappling with and learning about media arts gives the learner an understanding of the effort and skill artists need to communicate through media, and how media art genres of communication differ from other arts. Media art history contributes to the understanding of media arts by providing information about who created the work, what function it serves, the cultural context in which it was made, as well as how and why media arts have changed over time. Through criticism learners make informed judgments about media arts and they learn to observe, discriminate, compare, and contrast works of art, and to use expressive language to explain their assessments.

g r a d e s 5 - 8

Content Standards:

#1: Students explore, generate, and develop ideas and feelings through creating media productions.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Tell an original story, express personal feelings, or report information by recording images and sounds, by producing works such as a photograph, audiotape, hypercard stack, or video to tell a simple story.
- 2. Identify and analyze personal strengths and weaknesses by selecting, justifying, and discussing their own art work.
- 3. Use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of context, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in media productions, using such methods as camera placement or voice-over to present the point of view of a character from a specific culture.

#2: Students apply the media arts genres and their aesthetics to media productions.

- 1. Structure media productions by organizing media elements and applying processes "unique" to media arts, such as using simple special effects to create illusions in a videotape (e.g., making people disappear).
- Select and manipulate several media elements to create an original production, suggesting elements such as sounds, light, and settings to accompany dramatic story events.



g r a d e s 5 - 8

#3: Students employ skills and techniques of a chosen medium.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Select and operate media equipment that is appropriate for developing a given topic, photographing, for example, a subject using artificial lighting for creating a greater depth of field or for dramatic effect.
- 2. Apply skills and techniques to media productions to communicate a specific message or a particular point of view; combining, for instance, two images in such a way that a meaning is produced which is different from their separate meanings.

#4: Students collaborate effectively in group media production and presentation.

- 1. Cooperate in a group without close adult supervision to produce a media production.
- 2. Participate in more than one defined role in a variety of group media productions.
- 3. Demonstrate the ability to lead or contribute significantly to group productions.

g r a d e s 5 - 8

#5: Students acquire knowledge of the genres, techniques, and aesthetics in the media arts.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the various genres in the media arts, such as documentary, narrative, comedy, news, and experimental.
- 2. Recognize the use of time, motion, space, light, color, sound, and other aesthetic properties of the media arts, by understanding that qualities such as mood can be created by soundtrack, lighting, or pacing.
- 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the various production techniques used within a variety of genres, such as interviewing techniques, editing techniques, shot types, lighting techniques, or sound and image relationships.

#6: Students utilize critical thinking skills in the study of media messages.

- 1. Appropriately and articulately use the visual and verbal vocabulary of genre and the principles of media arts to make inferences and construct meaning, perhaps by explaining to others why frames in a storyboard follow a particular order.
- 2. Analyze and evaluate appropriateness and effectiveness of technical aspects of a media production by comparing, for example, camera angles in a video message.



g r a d e s 5 - 8

#7: Students demonstrate understanding and respect for personal, cultural, and historical contexts and the effects of media in shaping and extending human communication.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Identify features of media productions that locate them in a time, place, or culture, by examining such aspects as their physical characteristics and subject matter.
- Show an understanding of the ways media products are made within particular social, cultural, and historical contexts, by describing, for example, ways in which various groups use media to identify themselves.

#8: Students experience presenting the media arts to a wider community.

- 1. Analyze and evaluate the elements of an effective presentation using media.
- 2. Plan, select, and modify media productions for particular occasions, taking into account factors like purpose, space, materials, and equipment. Plan and present a production such as a radio program for the school using music, stories, and interviews in a magazine format.
- 3. Experiment with different presentation formats, such as various organizations of newspaper front pages or framing of photographs.

g r a d e s 5 - 8

#9: Students demonstrate the ability to actively participate as a discriminating consumer of the media arts to maintain a healthy media environment.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Judge the impact of various media messages on society, such as how violence portrayed in media productions is different from conflict resolution in real life. Solutions to real problems, for instance, usually take longer than five minutes.
- 2. Demonstrate the ability to reach and address media producers and identify ways to influence them, such as by writing letters to the local news station stating an opinion about a program.

#10: Students demonstrate the skills to become self-directed lifelong learners in the media arts.

- 1. Set a realistic goal and progress toward completion of a media arts project.
- 2. Develop strategies to organize and revise a media arts project.



g r a d e s 9 - 12

High School students continue to develop and extend their interaction with various genres of the media arts. Students at the exceptional level are expected to achieve the standards of the average and above average levels. A particular emphasis is placed on employing the use of one or more genres of the media arts to reflect increasing personal growth, maturity, creativity, problem-solving, and collaborative skills. Technical expertise and artistic expression are enhanced through the use, study, and evaluation of their own work and that of others. Students in grades nine through twelve develop increasing abilities to interpret and evaluate media within aesthetic, cultural, and historical contexts, and to relate these abilities to situations in contemporary life; thereby becoming enlightened consumers, lifelong learners, and effective citizens.

g r a d e s 9 - 12

Content Standards:

#1: Students explore, generate, and develop ideas and feelings through creating media productions.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Begin to discover a distinct voice by identifying true concerns and subjects.
- 2. Develop a clear message for a particular audience through a media arts production.
- 3. Construct media productions using ideas informed by an awareness of other media production practices, such as adapting stories from one media genre to another or using unusual techniques from an historical film.

#2: Students apply the media arts genres and their aesthetics to media productions.

- 1. Use media elements and aesthetics to develop media productions appropriate to one or more chosen style and genre.
- 2. Develop media productions that reflect sensitivity, commitment, and an understanding of aesthetic considerations, by using elements such as sound or lighting to enhance story developments or the character's emotional state.



g r a d e s 9 - 12

#3: Students employ skills and techniques of a chosen medium.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Demonstrate basic technical skills necessary to complete works in one or more media, using, for example, a digital camera to collect images, and then transferring the images from a scanner to a computer to create a digital photomontage.
- 2. Display the ability to control the medium using skills and techniques appropriate to a variety of circumstances. For example, edit for visual continuity in various genres including documentary, narrative, and experimental videotapes.
- 3. Understand ways in which technology can enhance artistic expression, using, for instance, sepia tone digital filters on video to create a feeling of the past or memories.
- 4. Begin to make revisions independently based on higher technical standards.

#4: Students collaborate effectively in group media production and presentation.

- 1. Accept responsibility for the goals of the group and speculate about the producer's intentions.
- Demonstrate a flexibility with various roles in group productions, working in such positions as an audio recorder, lighting director, and director in a variety of video productions.
- 3. Exercise leadership on behalf of the common good over a collaborative experience by utilizing the strengths of each individual in a group production.
- 4. Develop knowledge of media arts careers by evaluating their own skills.

g r a d e s 9 - 12

#5: Students acquire knowledge of the genres, techniques, and aesthetics in the media arts.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Understand the subjective and objective uses of the media arts.
- 2. Understand the purposes and functions of media aesthetics, such as visual interest, determining a place or time, and creating a mood or atmosphere.
- 3. Demonstrate the ability to determine how the media elements used in productions influence our perception; for example, how the use of color symbolism or how the editing of a film sequence can extend time or heighten excitement.

#6: Students utilize critical thinking skills in the study of media messages.

- 1. Summarize the works viewed by identifying, analyzing, and interpreting the media messages and discussing responses to them.
- 2. Reflect on how media productions differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally and describe how these are related to history and culture, perhaps by comparing the style and theme of films by directors from different countries.
- 3. Critically reflect on meanings and values associated with particular media messages.
- 4. Understand different approaches to media arts criticism, demonstrating this understanding in activities such as comparing and contrasting a variety of film reviews of the same film by different critics.



g r a d e s 9 - 12

#7: Students demonstrate understanding and respect for personal, cultural, and historical contexts, and the effects of media in shaping and extending human communication.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Understand, compare, and contrast the ways images and sounds are represented and interpreted by various cultures and groups in media productions, by participating in activities such as comparing how time is used in foreign films, films by a variety of ethnic groups, video art, and commercial U.S. films.
- 2. Evaluate how media promotes and influences belief and behaviors toward various ethnic, gender, and disability groups.

#8: Students experience presenting the media arts to a wider community.

- 1. Rehearse, promote, and present media productions to evoke certain audience responses.
- 2. Experiment with different presentation formats.

g r a d e s 9 - 12

#9: Students demonstrate the ability to actively participate as a discriminating consumer of the media arts to maintain a healthy media environment.

Teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Participate in a meaningful action or discussion concerning media decisions critical to society.
- 2. Demonstrate an understanding of commercial and legal issues related to media.

#10: Students demonstrate the skills to become self-directed lifelong learners in the media arts.

- 1. Demonstrate task and time management skills in daily and long-term media arts projects.
- 2. Seek out feedback for media arts projects and successfully integrate it into self-appraisal.
- 3. Consider the wide variety of possible careers in the media arts, such as photo journalism, television producing, cinematography, or computer graphics artist.



grades 9-12: advanced

Content Standards:

#1: Students explore, generate, and develop ideas and feelings through creating media productions.

Beyond Standard level, teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Use honest, original, vital images and sounds that are able to communicate ideas with clarity, focus, and confidence.
- 2. Demonstrate self-direction in choosing subjects and genres. Understand their origins and value.

#2: Students apply the media arts genres and their aesthetics to media productions.

- 1. Integrate media elements and aesthetics in an imaginative, skillful, and coherent way to make media productions.
- 2. Develop media productions that reflect sensitivity, commitment, and an understanding of aesthetic considerations.

grades 9-12: advanced

#3: Students employ skills and techniques of a chosen medium.

Beyond Standard level, teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Integrate technical and structural elements to make a media production, perhaps by increasing the use of abstract images produced by digital video effects over time to symbolize the change of the emotional state in the videotape.
- 2. Demonstrate the ability to experiment with unconventional ideas and techniques. For example, create a video installation in a room that uses multiple monitors and multiple video channels to explore a theme.

#4: Students collaborate effectively in group media production and presentation.

- 1. Create a collaborative media arts production or presentation that illustrates a shared aesthetic value.
- 2. Demonstrate the ability to initiate a collaboration.



grades 9-12: advanced

#5: Students acquire knowledge of the genres, techniques, and aesthetics in the media arts.

Beyond Standard level, teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Understand how various types of media differ in their approach to the same techniques or genre.
- 2. Decode media products in order to identify and examine the cultural practices, values, and ideas contained in them.

#6: Students utilize critical thinking skills in the study of media messages.

- 1. Use processes of critical analysis to support personal judgments of media messages.
- 2. Describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their own media productions and in the work of others.

grades 9-12: advanced

#7: Students demonstrate understanding and respect for personal, cultural, and historical contexts, and the effects of media in shaping and extending human communication.

Beyond Standard level, teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge of media arts history to their own work.
- 2. Research media productions and genres from a variety of past and present social and cultural perspectives and show an awareness of how histories of media are constructed.
- 3. Understand the historical and cultural developments which occur as a result of media or of messages carried in the media.

#8: Students experience presenting the media arts to a wider community.

- 1. Use imaginative approaches that reflect a wide knowledge of the conventions of rehearsing, promoting, and presenting media productions.
- 2. Seek additional exhibition opportunities at places such as art galleries, cable programs, public libraries, the internet, or film festivals.



grades 9-12: advanced

#9: Students demonstrate the ability to actively participate as a discriminating consumer of the media arts to maintain a healthy media environment.

Beyond Standard level, teachers develop curriculum enabling students to:

- 1. Develop and execute a plan that works toward positive social change in the media arts.
- 2. Demonstrate an understanding of commercial and legal issues related to media.

#10: Students demonstrate the skills to become self-directed lifelong learners in the media arts.

- 1. Demonstrate the ability to move independently from an initial idea through finished media arts project.
- 2. Demonstrate the ability to apply their own working process successfully to a wide variety of media arts projects.
- 3. Explore career opportunities in the media arts.